



Press Release

Immediate Release

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### **Essex Care Residents Celebrate Two Year Partnership With Local Charity**

An Essex care service is empowering people with learning disabilities to gain practical skills, build confidence and connect with their local community through a unique charity partnership.

Old Leigh House, which supports men with learning disabilities and mental or physical health needs, is located in Leigh-on-Sea.

The Cygnet Social Care service is celebrating a two year partnership with New Life Wood, a charity in South Essex providing work placements for those who find it difficult to access the job market.

The alliance has seen two individuals supported at Old Leigh House attending weekly sessions and working under the guidance of experienced wood-men to create their own masterpieces.

Joanna Furtak, Activities Coordinator at the Cygnet Social Care service, said: "It has been a great partnership that we are grateful for. The individuals we support feel very relaxed and comfortable working together with the experienced team at New Life Wood.

"Watching their confidence and enthusiasm grow has been wonderful and our residents are so proud to be part of a team. It is really valuable work experience as they've learnt basic woodwork skills."

New Life Wood offer training, mentoring and life skills through their not-for-profit recycling project work placements. The partnership has seen the Cygnet Social Care residents plane, sand and join to create items, such as shelves and plant boxes, which are then sold on to the local community.

Joanna said: "Over the past two years, we have really seen the benefits of this partnership. It gives our residents the chance to spend quality time with people in the local community and highlights the success of team-work. The best part is the sense of purpose and belonging it gives to the attendees.

"It has also taught the individuals we support new and important conversation skills. They love having a tea and biscuit break with the New Life Wood team as it gives them a chance to have a chat and form new friendships."

New Life Wood Manager Daren Palmer commented on the successful partnership: "We are really proud to be working with Old Leigh House and helping to provide a work-like experience for the residents. It is a fantastic partnership that the whole New Life Wood team feel privileged to be part of as we help make a difference in people's lives."

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